

FarSlide: A Gathering of Travelers

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Summary: The crew of Moya, the Sliders, PK, Kromaggs, and a few others are all the ingredients to a delicious recipe serving numerous portions of chaos, comedy, and even a bit of drama.

1. Default Chapter Title

Â© AkaiHato. Well, the basic text anyway.

>

I originally had this under one story, but then I began to wonder whether a 120 KB story might be menacingly large afterall, and so figured that a shift to a two-part story couldn't do too much harm. (Watch my actions become the catalyst leading to the demise of humankind or something. Actually, that would be pretty funny.)

>
 As a note, the time frame is mid-season for both season 5 of Sliders and Season 1 of Farscape. Also, I wasn't planning to, but since my motto was to stick some sort of humor in as many places as I could, I guess this is a parody afterall, bluntly or subtly making fun of Farscape, Sliders, and anything else that came to mind while I was tapping along. (Naturally, some exceptions are included where felt needed.) So the story, as a fair warning, may be a bit, ah... different from the fanfic of norm. Take that as you will, I guess.

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But anyway, without futher ado...

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A Gathering of Travelers

-A FarSlide production-

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>

It was the unusual magnetic ripple, no doubt about it. Pilot told everyone so. About the unusual magnetic ripple, not the rest.
>

Crichton and Aeryn were walking down the corridors of Moya, a few minutes after the announcements, having a discussion not about the magnetic ripple but instead arguing lightly about the technology of his home world, incidentally Earth, and the technology of Moya and otherwise. The magnetic ripple did not even cross their mind. In fact, everyone had forgotten about the magnetic ripple 30 microts later after Pilot had announced. The crew of Moya could only hear so many of these announcements, really.
>

Not that pondering on abnormal magnetic ripples would have prepared them for the large flashing blue vortex that opened out of thin air with a roar, causing gusts of wind to blow and flashes of lighting to, well, light everything up, not to mention odd little schving-tchwing noises. Aeryn, and even John, was fairly used to odd things happening, so she didn't scream and run away, although she did back up a little, unlike John who gave a yell and backing up looked around for cover, which was probably a good thing to do.
>

"YeeeeeeaaAAAAH!" Diana whooped, as she sped through the twists and turns of the transdimensional wormhole. If she ever settled down, she really was going to make a lot of money off the wormhole ride alone. "Oh no I'm thinking like Mallory," she muttered.

The silvery gateway appeared, and there was a guy and a girl standing near the entrance. Putting in factor the speed and altitude of the wormhole, she approximated where she would land, and yelled a warning.
>

"...looooOOOK OUT!" came a voice, a Human voice, English-speaking, from the... the big glowing tunnel thing, accompanied by an African-American woman with a wild look, who shot from the tunnel with an extra flash of light and sound, hitting Crichton square in the chest.
>

"Oofgh!" he said as she hit and he toppled on the ground with her on top. Before anyone could react, a somewhat-tall white guy with a jacket shot out of the glowing tunnel, yelling, with the light and sound also, and this time hit Aeryn. Both went down.
>

Then a brown-haired smaller girl came out of the vortex with what sounded like a battle cry, along with the customary light and sound, and landed somewhere on top of Aeryn and the last guy.
>

Finally a dark-skinned heavy-looking guy with a tux came hurling out, his yells mingling with the usual schwing and the tswing and the whoosh of wind. He somehow landed in the middle of everyone, which meant all 5 people felt the impact. "Oog! Aiee! Ow! -Oof! What's

-Uunf!"
>

Moments later, the vortex closed. A general chorus of groans could be heard, which was finally broken by "Remmi! Off! Get off!" accompanied by "Forget Remmi, you get off!" and "What- what's going on..."
>

From beneath Mallory came a muffled series of sounds that sounded a bit like, "Frell lla ffo uoy!" Mallory tried to roll over, but that in turn caused Maggie to be rolled over and somewhat crushed under Mallory. Finally everyone just started yelling at Remmi.
>

"Ok, ok, I'm off, I'm off," grumbled Remmi as he managed to get up. Aeryn all but threw Mallory and Maggie off as she scrambled up. Diana had managed to roll off Crichton, who moaned a little and began to get up, nursing his head slightly.

"Uh, sorry sir, I really didn't mean to..." started Diana, and trailed off.
>

Diana, Mallory, Remmi, and Maggie had finally gotten a look at where they where.
>

In fact, they were still looking. Staring, to be precise. Crichton and Aeryn were, too, but at the Sliders, not at Moya's interior.
>

Mallory put a hand on his head, and ran his fingers through his hair. "Um...I know this is the most used, most unoriginal, universal line of all time, but.... Where are we!?"
>

Just then Rygel chose the moment to hover into view. "Well, here I am, Pilot, and nothing seems to be-" Rygel abruptly cut off and his eyes almost bulged. "What the Yotz....Oh dear gods, more Crichtons!"

>

Meanwhile, the sliders, upon seeing what appeared to be a sentient amphibian of some sort about two feet tall dressed in robes warring around in a floating throne, let out a startled cry, especially when the thing began speaking in a mix of alien syllables and words. "Whoa, whoa, where ARE we?" yelled Mallory.
>

"English- You're from Earth? You're Human?" blurted Crichton. Aeryn stepped forward. Rygel said something else, in an entirely different tone, causing both Aeryn and Crichton to give him a look.

"What? What'd he just say?" asked Remmi tersely, and put a hand on Aeryn's shoulder. Aeryn spun around and whipped her pulse rifle up so that the nozzle of the gun was barely an inch from Remmi's face. Remmi jerked his hands up and said, "Hold on there, don't shoot me. I'm human, same as you."
>

Aeryn was insulted and said so.

>

"Whoa, never mind."

"Where are we?" repeated Mallory.

"Ero'M yl'tnatropmi, 'ohw erra' ouy'? " demanded Aeryn.

"...Where are we?" asked Mallory again.

"Mallory, shut up. Listen, please don't go trigger-happy on Remmi-" started Maggie, turning to Aeryn.

>

"Aeryn? Put the rifle down. I'm pretty sure they aren't dangerous, whoever they are," Crichton told Aeryn.

"If they're even remotely related to Crichton, that's a guarantee," pointed out Rygel, hovering closer.

Aeryn lowered her pulse rifle, although whether it was because of Rygel's or Crichton's reasoning was hard to tell.

"I have the impression we were just insulted," muttered Diana to Mallory, who nodded, then added,

"So where are we?"

>

Suddenly, 4 or 5 DRD's sped from nowhere and started heading for the Sliders, who, quite naturally, jumped around and dodged them, yelling meanwhile to Crichton [who they had instinctually marked as 'friend'] on what they were.

"They're DRDs! They're harmless-"

"Why does this one have a drill or something coming out of the top?"

"Don't worry, they won't hurt- wait, amend that, I'm pretty sure they won't hurt you-"

"OW! "

"Yeaow! "

"Aiee! "

"Aah! "

>

Translator microbes. Crichton had forgotten about that.

"The things just stabbed my foot!" complained Maggie.

"Where are we?" cried Mallory.

Suddenly the world went hazy for the 4 sliders.

Aeryn began speaking. "-Kool', fi I t'nod tyyege-eet-somm-e'e infoorr-mation out of you four soon, I'm going to have to assume you are enemies, despite what Crichton says." Aeryn thought about this. "Or at least, I'm going to assume your intelligence level is even lower than Crichton's."
>

"What's going on... Oh my," said Zhaan softly, appearing from the same direction as Rygel.

"...What are those things?" Remmi said, glancing down at the DRDs who were beginning to scurry off. He was convinced they were, in some way, evil. Probably the rest of the sliders thought the same thing, even after the microbes injection was quickly explained.
>

Mallory, having enough, turned towards Zhaan, Rygel, Crichton, and Aeryn, smiled, spread his hands, and in a pseudo-bright-and-cheerful voice, said, "WHERE are we...again?"
>

Zhaan swiftly explained, as she led everyone to the common room, that they were aboard Moya, a Leviathan, and were currently traveling in the uncharted territories in deep space. Mallory stopped grinning, not that he hadn't been expecting something along those lines.

For that matter, the rest of the sliders looked slightly dazed, but seemed to have accepted the explanations more or less.

Crichton appeared impressed that they were so flexible. "You four seem pretty calm, what's up with that?"

To which a reply was made of, "Yeah, well, experience, you know."

"....Who are you again?" asked Crichton.

Even Aeryn had to acknowledge a brief look of admiration. Meanwhile, quick introductions were made, by Crichton on behalf of the crew of Moya. "The raven-haired dangerous looking chick with gun is Aeryn Sun, a Sebaccian," he said, gesturing appropriately to his personnel of description. "The flying musty-green frog is his highness Dominar Rygel the 16th, and the, uh, blue one is Zhaan."
>

Just then, the assorted group came to the main chamber entrance. Zhaan touched her hand near the doorway, and the gates swung upon. The sliders 'ooooh'ed.

The scene of Chiana, sitting over some project or another with DRD close by, and Pilot's holo in the holo-shell nearby met them. The sliders 'aaaah'ed.

D'Argo came striding up from behind, Qualta blade in hand, and regarded the sliders with suspicion, emitting a low, disapproving growl. The sliders 'aaiie'ed.
>

"D'Argo, stop frightening the humans," said Zhaan nonchalantly, and continued walking forward, gesturing for the sliders to come in.

>

"The big guy in red with the sword is D'Argo," Crichton cheerfully continued his introductions, "pips there, the pale white one, is Chiana, the blue one in the hologram is Pilot, and the little yellow guys zooming around, as mentioned, are the DRDs."

"The...Dee-Are-Dee's...." repeated Remmi in a slightly different tone.

"Hey look, all the primary colors and more!" pointed out Maggie.
>

Diana dove into introductions on their behalf, seeing that Aeryn and D'Argo looked dangerously impatient. "The brown-haired dangerous looking one is Maggie," explained Diana, gesturing, "the one in the tux is Rembrant Brown- that is, Remmi; the tall, uh..."

"Good looking?" supplied Mallory.

"...Annoying one with the weird hairdo is Mallory, and I'm Diana."

"Very well, Remmi, Maggi, Mallori, and Dian...a...: why and how did you come aboard Moya?" asked Rygel curtly.
>

"Well, we were supposed to just slide into another parallel dimension," started Maggie, as if she were describing a trip to the nearby park. "But something went wrong. As usual. And we don't know why. Also as usual."

Maggie gave a questioning look to the crew of Moya.

The crew of Moya exchanged similar looks.

So everyone looked towards Pilot's holo.

Pilot looked vaguely nettled. Then again, Pilot always looked vaguely nettled. But this time, he looked almost exasperated. "The magnetic ripple?" Pilot hinted, slightly sarcastically.

"What magnetic ripple?"

"Which one?"

"I thought it was a series of unnatural solar flares."

"No, that was last week."

"I thought the magnetic ripple was yesterday."

"Nah, yesterday it was the asteroids."

"What about the flux in the pattern of Moya's rhythms? That was today, wasn't it?"

"I think so, but what would that have to do with anything?"
>

Diana, upon hearing the news of the unusual magnetic ripple, immediately went off into a complex technological explanation. "The variation in the normal magnetic range could have easily affected the geosytric locational factor in the electromagnetic component of the timer's synthetic transportation constituent, considering the coiling and framework of the timer's transport unit..."

Crichton shook his head. "No, the range and chance of an magnetic ripple affecting the geosytric locational factor, at the mass and at the size of that electrical compound, is almost the same as the chances of an ultraviolet wavelength of light mixed in with visible wavelengths of light being consciously detected."

>

Diana blinked. "Wait a second, you're not supposed to know that."

>

"But he is right," agreed Aeryn, as well as Rygel, D'Argo, Chiana, and even Zhaan, each of them giving a fairly reasonable backup.

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Diana looked flustered. Mallory laughed.

>

Even Pilot quietly offered his own theory. "Technically, the chances of a magnetic wave alone causing the distortion of the transportation unit of your...timer... is considerably low. But by the 5th law of magnetic gravity, the centrifical Froonium in the copper wiring of your time may have actually been responsible for such a major flux."

>

"Wha?" said Diana. "Are you sure about that?"

"No, not really, but if it were true, it would help explain things."

Everyone had to agree on Pilot's logic.

>

Pilot continued. "You may have actually traveled far from your earth, but there is the other possibility that this is an, er, parallel dimension for you after all, with your Earth never existing and whatnot, or you've quite literally stepped into somewhere other than your present timeline."

Maggie thoughtfully commented, "Well, that's a new one, all right."

Diana seemed at loss of words. Seeing this, Mallory stepped in as a sub. "If it's the former or latter of the three possibilities, then our chances of getting somewhere habitable much less Earth, are minimal. However, if indeed the middle possibility is correct, we can assume the next interdimentional slide we take will take us to a more normal environment on Earth. 'Normal' being used loosely." Then Mallory looked rather disturbed. "Either possibility, the chances of us landing on a habitable ship with a decent sentient crew, compared with the chances of landing on a ship with not-so-a-decent-crew, planet, asteroid, or most likely just somewhere in the void of space,

was, uh, panickingly slim."

Maggie, Diana, and Remmi looked at Mallory in awe. "...You mean you're actually smart?"

Mallory shrugged. "Yeah, but I just don't bother."

Remmi gave Mallory an affectionate wack. "You should go smart more often, man."

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Surprisingly enough, it was not the Sliders that looked both the most startled and disturbed by this, but Crichton. "Parallel universe.... dimension...." he murmured.

>

Meanwhile, D'Argo, Aeryn, Rygel, and Chiana had been, well, staring. Finally Rygel blurted what they were thinking.

"What is WRONG with you people!?"

Zhaan offered a simple explanation. "They are crichtons." Then, as if her former comment had been nonexistent, Zhaan looked towards the Sliders, bowed graciously, and murmured, "You are welcomed guests aboard Moya, and as your hosts, may we ask you to tell us more about yourselves?"

D'Argo rephrased it as, "Since you came barging aboard Moya and we have your lives in our hands, you at least owe us explanations."

>

Remmi put a hand to his head. Maggie ran a hand through her hair. Diana looked glazed. Mallory appeared absolutely fascinated with something on Moya's ceiling, which he might have actually been. One by one, Diana, Mallory, then Maggie looked towards Remmi.

>

Remmi looked flustered, but began. "It started about 5 years ago..."

He was immediately interrupted to explain how long a year was, which Crichton hastily supplied.

Remmi resumed, explaining as best he could about how Quinn had been trying to make some sort of antigravity machine but instead created a device to travel between dimension that would enable them to stay at each dimension from a few moments to a few days to even a few weeks, what was to be dubbed the Timer, how Quinn, Professor Arturo, and Wade had first slid and how he, Rembrandt, had accidentally gone along with the ride when the portal moved.

Remmi could not list all the worlds and adventures they had, but he briefly explained how Professor Arturo was discovered to have an incurable illness, and eventually how they met Maggie and helped save part of her world, but for the price of countless deaths and 'comas', including Professor Arturo's deterioration and death. It was then that Maggie joined them. Soon they forged a more permanent, deadlier enemy, "Kromaggs," differently evolved humans, who had the technology to slide among other traits. They were captured more than once; at one point, Quinn and Maggie were forced to slide away from Wade and

Remmi for about 2 months, during which Remmi was tortured and Wade was shipped away into a breeding camp. Remmi was rescued, Wade... is presumed dead. But soon enough, Quinn's long lost brother, Colin, was found.

Eventually the explanation got around to why exactly Quinn and Colin were branded so permanently on the Kromagg's "Really Annoying People That Need To Be Squished" list. Since the explanation involved mass extinction of the Kromaggs and their basic present condition being due to a weapon that Quinn's parents made, as well as several other things, the talk became.... confusing. And then, the explanation of what exactly happened to Colin and Quinn and how Diana and Malloy got involved and who exactly Mallory was swung around.

>

"Well... if you have to know, Mallory used to be Quinn. I mean, Mallory's Quinn's double from a parallel universe, only he was paralyzed or something. Anyway, Dr. Geiger figured out how to stick together parts of alternate Mallories. Then he and our Quinn were merged together, Mallory was the dominant side for a while and then Quinn's dormant personality sort of... uh.... went away, when Malloy got brainwashed by drinking water that had a bunch of small, glowing, telepathic I guess, microorganisms in it. Actually, I'm not too sure on that part. Anyway, we just call Mallory by his last name, since calling him Quinn, although that is his first name, sort of degenerates our nice image of Quinn," explained Remmi bluntly.

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The crew of Moya had a expression of bafflement written on their faces.

>

Remmi tried to clarify things. "Colin became 'unstuck,' that is, his vibrational frequency flux got trashed and he hops randomly from dimension to dimension. So anyway, we ended up sliding with Mallory and Diana. See, Dr. Geiger was this wacked genius who somehow killed off all his alternates and got himself unstuck. He couldn't stand it, so he managed to get himself to say in one place via a magnetic field, and he was using Quinn/Mallory as a guinea pig-

"A what?" asked Rygel.

"-A lab rat, no wait, as test subject for his evil plan to mush all the universes together into one so he would quit bouncing around, yada yada, the usual selfish scheme that mad geniuses tend to create, I think he's still after our blood, though, but- ah, forget it," finished Remmi. "So the point is, Malloy is, um....uh...."

"He's a total enigma," explained Maggie in a sincere voice with a polite smile.

Mallory blinked at his new title.

"And.... Doctor Geiger?" asked Zhaan.

"He's a complete enigma."

"Ah. "

>

There was a momentary silence as the crew of Moya tried to put everything together. Aeryn muttered something about making a note to NEVER ask the history of strangers again.
>

"You mean, that little TV remote with the flashing red numbers really is a transdimensional portal-creating device?" Crichton spoke, raising an eyebrow.

"And you humans created it? Not only that, but one that fits in your hand? With your level of intelligence?" asked Aeryn with a tone that may have held awe or just disbelief.

"And you've been traveling with it between dimensions for maybe 4 and a half cycles?" inquired Chiana, cocking her head.

"What is WRONG with your species, Crichton?" stated Rygel.

Crichton shrugged. "We're Human."
>

Then Crichton looked amused. "So you, Remmi, were accidentally tossed into the entire affair when what seems to be the only time the portal ever moved, yet you're the only original member still sliding?"

"I know, it sucks, doesn't it?" agreed Remmi.
>

"So, now that we have briefly explained who we are, may we have the pleasure of being better acquainted with who you are?" smiled Maggie, perhaps a little stiffly, at the crew of Moya.

D'Argo, Chiana, Rygel, Zhaan, and even Pilot looked uncomfortable. One by one, glances were stolen at Crichton.

"Oh, so your lives are not up for discussion, but mine is?" complained Crichton. "Fine. Well, I was trying out this method of space travel with my little module, which I call Farscape 1, when this radiation wave hit me and I ended up getting sucked into a wormhole, and was spit out here. It's, um, a really long story, but anyway, Moya eventually picked me up, and so here I am, somehow stuck aboard a bio-mechanoid ship with... with these guys. In short, we're a bunch of random aliens tossed together."

Remmi patted Crichton on the shoulder sympathetically.
>

Just then, as if by cue, another portal appeared.

"Huh?" said all four Sliders in unison.

Diana added in an exasperated tone, "Oh, now what?"

With a roar from the portal and several more bits of lightning, a figure came hurling out of the wormhole and struck Crichton. Again.

It was a woman with a wild look on her face. Again.

"Agh!" Crichton said he toppled on the ground with her on top. Again.

>

"What is with you and-" started Aeryn.

>

"Who are you?" snarled the woman to Crichton. Without waiting for a reply, she leaped to her feet, shortish red-hued hair flying, spun around, and, seemly undisturbed by the fact that she was surrounded by several aliens and frightened DRDs, held up a handgun and barked, "Where's Quinn?"

Mallory flinched. Remmi held up a hand. "Whoa now, easy there, who are you?"

"Wait a minute, where am I?" said the woman abruptly, turning around, gun still held stiffly. D'Argo narrowed his eyes and, silently drawing out his Qualta balde, made a slight rumbling growl from behind her. The woman whirled around, yelled in complete surprise, and jerked back a few steps, hitting Rygel. She gave an even more louder yell, making Rygel cringe in annoyance.

"Ok, look, where's Quinn?" cried the woman, glancing feverishly around her.

"Uh, who are you?" asked Remmi again.

>

The women looked at Remmi in disbelief. "What do you mean, who am I? You know perfectly well who I am!"

Remmi scratched his head. "Actually, I-" Remmi paused, punched his hand and wrung his fingers a little, which seemed to aid in his thought process, and with a sudden luminating look appearing on his face, finally blurted, "Wait, I do know who you are! You're that evil dimensional twin of Quinn!"

>

"Hey, that rhymes," pointed out Mallory.

"Who?" stated everyone else.

>

"Man, long time no see! Where you been all this while?" cried Remmi, who could not remember what her name was.

"Remmi dear? I think she wants to kill you," commented Maggie from the side.

>

>

D'Argo had had enough. With a look of impatience, he brought his qualta blade up slightly and gave a mild slap of the woman's hand and wrist with the flat of his blade.

With a cry of pain, or possibly just suprise, she dropped the gun. Aeryn swiftly grabbed her arm and twisted it behind her back, then snatched something from her back pocket. She briefly glanced at it, then wordlessly tossed it towards Diana.

>

Diana caught it, and held it up for everyone to see. It was the woman's timer. Diana thought for a moment, then quietly activated the portal.

>

In the midst of the roaring and crackling of the vortex, as well as the woman's frantic cries and yells, Maggie calmly walked over to Aeryn, took hold of the woman, then shoved her into the wormhole.

Maggie, Diana, Mallory, and Remmi looked at the taken timer, then at each other. Diana shrugged, then threw the timer into the wormhole moments before it closed completely.

>

Crichton broke the astonished silence with, "Umm... what... was that?"

The Sliders looked at each other and shrugged. They had merely run out of patience with these sort of things.

"The point is, she's gone, we can forget about her," pointed out Rygel sensibly.

"Ah.... What exactly was her name..." asked Zhaan hesitantly.

Remmi shrugged.

>

Just then Pilot announced, "Attention! Peacekeepers have been sighted! They have ambushed us!"

The crew of Moya groaned in unison.

>

"Peacekeepers?" asked Diana. "They aren't, by any chance, oh, militaristic mercenaries who stick their noses into other species business, are they?"

The crew of Moya jolted.

The sliders noticed this reaction, and still in unison, both they and the crew of Moya asked Diana, "How did you know that?"

Diana shrugged.

Mallory whispered to Remmi and Maggie, "I think Diana's trying to reclaim her position as the inexplicable genius." Remmi and Maggie agreed.

"The Peacekeepers are loading onto Moya," continued Pilot.

>

"....They just flew into Moya? Without resistance?"

>

"They were about to blow off the hangar doors," replied Pilot. "But anyway, Crais is among them."

"What do you mean, Crais is among them?" snapped Crichton.

"How should I know? He just is!" snapped back Pilot, startling everyone.

>

"Well...let's just send a bunch of DRD's to shoot lasers at them," suggested Chiana saucily.

"Hah, they ARE dangerous!" cried Remmi triumphantly.

Then everyone considered this idea for a moment, until Pilot informed them that although the DRD's may stand against an entire hoard of Peacekeepers, they would probably damage Moya, and it was going to be difficult getting that number of DRD's to accumulate so quickly. Pilot added, "But it will hold them back, giving the rest of you time to devise a plan to... get to the escape pods."

Even Rygel and D'Argo seem to cringe a little.

"No... No, the area of the transportation pods is too close to the main docking area, and Peacekeepers will probably guard them anyway...." trailed off Aeryn half-heartedly.

"I'm afraid I must inform you that the Peacekeepers are tromping down this tier and are going to be here any microt. There's also some sort of disturbance in the lower tiers, but-"

"Pilot, what do you mean? How the Yotz did they get so fast at these things?" protested Rygel, hovering anxiously.

Pilot remained silent. A dangerous look came into his orange eyes. The crew of Moya abruptly scrambled towards Rygel, bursting into a babble of,

"Frell! Pilot's going to crack!"

"Rygel, apologize. Now!"

"What, why should I- Hey, let go!"

"Look, he's bowing, he's lowering his head-"

"He's getting mauled, I tell you! Let go of me!"

"Wait, everyone shut up, the PK are coming!"

>

Chiana spoke. "Perhaps we should, oh, flee?" she suggested hesitantly.

>

No sooner said than done, Chiana was nearly trampled by Rygel, Zhaan, all the Sliders, and Crichton as they all rushed out from the chamber.

"Wait a microt! This is really stupid!" frantically yelled Chiana, running after them. "In fact, this is the stupidest thing we've done yet! And there's a lot of competitors for that title!"

>

"She's right, we should confront them and fight," declared Aeryn from behind Chiana, pulling up her rifle.

"Exactly. I would rather die a warrior's death than that of a cowards," D'Argo stated, also beside Aeryn, unsheathing his Qualta blade.

The two of them swiftly walked towards the incoming sound of the Peacekeepers. Crouching low, they simultaneously edged their faces closer and scanned the owners of the ominous footsteps. Still in perfect synchronization, they scrabbled back, spun around against the wall, then marched back towards everyone else.

"But if we do avoid them, we have a better chance of success in survival."

"One who runs away, lives to fight another day."

The crew of Moya looked deeply disturbed. Seeing this, Maggie asked Aeryn and D'Argo about just what sort of weapons had the Peacekeepers been carrying.

"You are better off not knowing."

"Ignorance can be bliss."

Everyone exchanged looks.
>

Then the sounds of the Peacekeepers became menacingly loud. Pilot commed in, and begin giving directions on which paths to avoid the Peacekeepers.

As they ran along, quietly as possible, Chiana continued to voice her complaints about the situation.

"Ah, I don't mean to make fools out of everyone--"

"Well, then. Don't."

"But I just have this insistent idea that somehow, we could be in a better scenario than running around in Moya's interior trying to dodge Peacekeepers, like some frelling youngling's electro-game."

"May we remind you that this was your idea?"

"Well... I never expect you to listen to me anyway, why should this was any different?"
>

"Speaking of which," began Diana, trying to catch her breath, "um... what kind of plan DO we have?"

Her question was met with silence.

"...Is that wise?"

"Term it impromptu," explained Crichton. "Plans generally die on you

in these situations anyway."

"Comforting."

>

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Somehow or another, they ended up near the docking bay. Pilot made a note on the comm that he had managed to thwart the Peacekeepers from reaching his chamber, mainly because they were chasing after the rest of the crew and the Sliders. He then directed the assembly to a secluded hiding niche, part of a ledge, above some structure or another in the docking bay.

By lying on their stomachs and peeking over the edge, about half the crowd could get a good view on the scene below them, while the other half stayed in the back of the niche so as not to be seen. Peacekeepers swarmed below.

>

After a while in the crowded niche, it was swiftly conversed and unanimously agreed upon.

"Rygel? What exactly is it with you and your timing-"

"What, are you claiming not to be worried and anxious?"

And so it was that the sliders experienced one of the lesser known wonders of the universe, demonstrated by Rygel.

>

In addition, it was swiftly conversed and unanimously agreed upon that no one really had any idea of what to do.

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Then suddenly Chiana hissed, "Frell! We could have just, I don't know, ambushed them from the main chamber!"

Everyone looked at Chiana, then looked at the Peacekeepers.

"...Anyway, there's Crais over there, near the far left Peacekeeper ship," noted Aeryn.

>

"Uh, hold on a microt-" began Chiana.

>

"By the looks of things, is Crais a Sebashtian too?" asked Remmi.

Aeryn looked at Remmi. "....A WHAT?"

>

"Hey, did any of you hear me?" demanded Chiana.

>

"Don't think I ever got around to hearing who Crais is, and why he's after ya'll's blood," said Mallory, raising an eyebrow in a questioning look.

>

Chiana gave up.

>

"Well, to make it short," began Crichton, "when I came out of the wormhole with my Moya module, I wacked into this Peacekeeper, Crais's brother -I forgot his name- but anyway he bounced off my module and wacked into a nearby asteroid, got killed, Crais wants me dead, and I guess he's gone a little insane, especially after-"

Crichton's explanation was interrupted by yet another opening of a portal. Only this time, it was a rather large portal, with extra lightning and sound, and the hue was not blue, but red.

>

All the Sliders edged closer, looks of disbelief on their faces.

"You don't think-" began Diana.

"No way!" cried Mallory.

Two manta ships came flying out of the portal, and slowed to a hesitant hover before landing.

"Oh... Crap..." muttered Maggie, turning pale.

Remmi just made a sound somewhere between a moan and a groan, as he watched Kromaggs tramp out of the ship.

>

"They're more hideous looking than Rygel," pointed out Chiana, crowding to get a view. She added, "Incidentally, I presume they're the aforementioned Crow-mags?"

"Yuh-huh," confirmed Remmi in a depressed tone.

>

And then, as if just to make things more interesting, in the midst of the nervous Kromaggs and Peacekeepers, with a blurry flash of light, appeared Geiger.

>

The jaws of Remmi, Maggie, Diana, and Mallory fell open, and expressions of utter disbelief were carved into their faces.

Mallory, who was on his stomach, groaned, "Why us? Why us? Why? Us?" and wacked his head on the floor of the ledge each time.

"Ok, what is WITH your ship's electromagnetic field?" demanded Diana, realizing Geiger hadn't disappeared.

The fact that Geiger abruptly appeared out of nowhere really didn't help the scenario below. Being the trained soldiers they were, the Peacekeepers and Kromaggs didn't erupt into full fledged panic, as anyone else would have done when a being were to materialize from thin air, but merely recoiled in full fledged panic, with interesting expressions marked on their faces, the kind that one would normally not associate with Peacekeepers and Kromaggs.

However, any chances of improvement were hurled out the window, when a swirl of crimson light marked the appearance of a black suited stranger with eerie yellow eyes.

>

This time, it was the crew of Moya's turn to gain a look of spectacular disbelief. Rygel summed it up nicely by his comment to everyone below. "What the Yotz is WRONG with these people?"

"So who's that dude?" asked Mallory, a similar expression of curiosity written upon Chiana's features.

D'Argo, Aeryn, Rygel, and Zhaan looked at Crichton for the honors.

"...Maldis," said Crichton, dripping with disgust.

>

"...Just how many enemies do you have?" asked Maggie.

"I thought we were bad off," added Diana.

"How come you guys don't bother telling me about these things?" demanded Chiana to the crew of Moya.

>

Crichton answered all the questions with a shrug, and gave a quick reference to the person of discussion. "As I was saying, Crais may have gone off his trolley because of this incident involving me and a really nasty guy named Maldis who drinks off Death- but that's another long story. Basically it ended that we mostly killed him, but not all the way, and until now I'd, well, completely forgotten about him." Crichton added, "There's also this really old guy named Durka, who we think is dead, but he might not be."

>

"Maul-dis? A villain in deep space with a gangster accent?" asked Remmi. "Where do you people come up with these names?"

"Aaand... so this Mauldis has come back for revenge?" asked Mallory. "Along with Crais, Geiger, and the Kromaggs?"

"Must be."

"Ok, what is WITH your ship in general?" demanded Diana.

Rygel muttered, "We should charge an entry fee for everyone and be done."

>

Indeed, the scene below, which the entire group in the niche crowded together at the edge of the ledge to watch (entirely forgetting not to be seen themselves), was like some messed up version of a gigantic New Years Eve Party.

>

The Kromaggs and the Peacekeepers had attempted some sort of communication, but the fact was, that although the Peacekeepers could understand what the Kromaggs were saying, the Kromaggs hadn't a clue

to what the Peacekeepers were saying.

>

"Ah.. Sir? Where are we?" hesitantly asked a Kromagg subofficer.

"Never mind that, get troops ready to search for the Sliders. Our tech team reported they were somewhere in this area," commanded the officer. "In the meanwhile, I'll deal with these.... beings. Whoever they are."

>

"I should like to ask you the same thing," said Crais, trying not to let his voice show how unnerved he was.

>

The Kromagg officer blinked.

" 'Ohw erra' ouy'? " the opposing being continued. " 'Dna yb 'tahw ssnaem did 'ouy 'teg 'erehh?"

"What- what the nigithis is he saying?" hissed the officer to a nearby subordinate. "Never mind, just fetch the lingeral expert staff."

>

Crais looked surprised at this, and exchanged a few hushed words with a nearby officer. "Why the frell don't they have microbe translators?"

>

>

Meanwhile, Maldis and Geiger eyed each other suspiciously, and began to slowly, tensely, walk around each other. Although neither of them said anything, they were both wondering about this other being, and how come they had the ability to appear out of mid-air also. Like distrustful dogs, they began walking a few paces in one direction.

>

Then, of course, some Kromaggs tried to force their way through the crowd to search for the Sliders, and being that the communication was one sided, added to the fact that Maldis and Geiger were still freaking out more than a few Peacekeepers and Kromaggs, added to that, that Crais and the Kromagg officer were forced to move because of that number of Peacekeepers and Kromaggs trying to get out of the way of Maldis and Geiger, added to that, that Pilot decided to send some DRD's to either block the entrance to throw everyone off on where the crew of Moya and the Sliders were located, or possibly just for the spirit of things - All in all, no one knew quite what to make of the situation. Although most everyone hiding, or rather forgetting to hide, in the niche were having an interesting time being spectators.

>

But by the laws of the universe, nothing can just remain a spectator very long.

>

....Although, technically, the laws of the universe generally don't

have Maldis, Geiger, Crais, and half a dozen Kromaggs and Peacekeepers in one place at one time, specifically somehow all walking and ending up right under an overhanging ledge which wasn't meant to support more than a few beings, where 10 beings who are trying to back up into hiding are all crowded on.

>

Crais looked to speak, when he abruptly tensed, hearing something, and so swiftly scanned the area.

The Kromagg officer, too, realized there was a suspicious disturbance somewhere. Actually, that wasn't a really good term, since the description could be used for too many things.

Anyway, it sounded like muffled phrases of, "Back! Back! Closer!" "You get back, you get closer! Especially with a Hynerian!" "Owie, my foot!" "Ah, frell it all!"

But where...?

>

And then, with an ominous crunching noise, the ledge bent, broke, and teetered, while everyone but Chiana, Remmi, and Rygel came raining down on Maldis, Geiger, Crais, and half dozen Kromaggs and Peacekeepers. Complete chaos was obtained at last.

>

Chiana and Remmi looked at each other, shrugged, and jumped after them.

>

Crais and the Kromagg officer heaved themselves out of the tanglement, and exclaimed, "Hah!"

>

A moment later they were hit by Chiana and Remmi. Then Rygel came floating down with a smug expression.

Seeing that a large number of Peacekeeper officers and the Kromaggs were rushing towards them, Crichton spring up valiantly to rush over and hold Crais hostage, or at least tried, failing quite miserably probably due to the fact that he was being crushed under two or three people who were trying to do the same. And then, to top it off, Maldis materialized nearby, looking really pissed. Geiger was nowhere to be seen.

But no matter; Chiana was on the case, and grabbing someone's gun whipped it to Crais's head. "Look 'ere, you want your commander's head blown off or not-"

Crack! A Peacekeeper soldier whipped her foot and Chiana's gun went flying. The soldier leaped up, a look of triumph on her face-

Whumph! -only to have it wiped off her face by Rygel slamming into her. Rygel made a sharp turn and, grabbing the falling gun, slowed to a hover near Crais's head and calmly put the nozzle towards Crais's noggin and his finger on the trigger. "Right, I don't think you Peacekeepers would want to explain how a Hynerian is responsible for your commander's head being well ventilated."

Meanwhile, Remmi had taken the cue and similarity had a gun pointed towards the Kromagg officer's skull, although in truth he wasn't sure whether he even knew how to use the thing. "Uh- ditto on what he just said! Sort of."

>

Unfortunately, no one had noticed the unobtrusive Kromagg in the background who had quietly been fiddling with his rifle.

"What- Look out!" yelled D'Argo to Remmi. A hazy yellow pelt of light came shooting from an unseen Kromagg's gun. Remmi gave a slight yell and threw the Kromagg officer in front of him.

Whoosh! The bolt of light hit the Kromagg, but then expanded into a spherical net, engulfing Remmi, Crais, and Rygel. All four hit the ground like sacks of potatoes, except for Rygel, who sort of glide-crashed with his floating chair.

Kromagg officers sprang forth to rush to their leader, Peacekeepers right behind them, at the same time the crew of Moya and the Sliders rushed to regain hostages and get to Remmi and Rygel. Everyone, or at least a dozen or so people in close proximity, crashed together, and complete chaos was obtained yet again.

>

>

Maldis, standing off in the side and apparently above such squabbling, looked bored and still fairly annoyed. Maldis had planned on taking care of Zhaan, who had nearly killed him, then Crichton, who had helped nearly kill him, then the rest of the miserable batch while he was at it, since one way or another they all were linked to his current decline. He had a very nice, simple plan worked out, but the fact is, it had been blown off into oblivion upon his unfavorable entry and the general nature of the current situation.

The general nature of the current situation was, well, bad. Instead of a workable half-dozen or so crew alone aboard the Leviathan, it was an assortment of Peacekeepers, who he never did care for, and several individual members from various species, in addition to a hoard of unrecognized species who seemed to have abruptly appeared from no part of the universe and that curious aged being with the fluxuating energy-pattern, all uncontrolled living beings, all part of a seemingly chaotic mess of actions and consequences, along with something wrong with the general underlying fabric of the space in and surrounding the Leviathan, all contributing to possibly one of the worst- well, second or third worst environments for executing his plans ever, and he wasn't even going to go in on how much it distracted him from decent thought process. And then, blast it all, that Delvian had noticed him some time ago, and Maldis doubted she would be without a trick up her sleeve either.

Hm. Maldis had no intent on giving up, but a fresh start would be wiser.

However, neither was he going to let those Peacekeepers claim the honor of torturing/killing Zhaan and Crichton in the in the meantime...

>

>

A Kromagg reached Remmi, drew out a gun, and began to say something; Chiana suddenly loomed behind him, kicked the gun from his hand and, clasping her hands together, wacked him on top his head. Unfortunately, a moment later, a Peacekeeper officer barged into her, kicked by D'Argo, and the two of them went sprawling on the floor. Then D'Argo was overwhelmed by 3 or four Kromaggs and Peacekeepers. Aeryn, hesitating on using her rifle for fear of either shooting a companion or shooting an enemy and the shot reflecting onto a companion, finally just started hitting everyone with the butt of her rifle, while looking for someone of importance to take hostage. The Kromagg and Peacekeepers tried to rally, but with the communication glitch and all, added to the hostage problem, things weren't going so well. So in essence, it was a huge brawl.

>

Zhaan, however, managed to slip away from the crowd and make herself unseen. Unseen, however, not to Maldis, as she herself knew.

The two faced each other. Maldis glanced at the crowd; it was obvious that Zhaan's companions were about to be overwhelmed or just killed, and as mentioned, he really didn't want to face Zhaan at this particular moment. Maldis sighed, and slowly moved his arm in a sweeping fashion towards the mass of beings. At the last moment he flicked his hand.

>

Out of nowhere a sphere of crimson light began to bloom in the midst of the brawl. Everyone stopped moving, as it began to slowly grow. Then it suddenly blew up in a wave of crimson light, flinging Peacekeepers and Kromaggs every which way and somehow leaving the crew of Moya, as well as the Sliders, apparently unscathed if not in various degrees of bewilderment. In addition, Zhaan's attention from Maldis had been distracted.

>

While part of the Kromaggs and Peacekeepers struggled to recover, the Sliders and the crew of Moya first looked at the number of the Kromagg and Peacekeepers who had not been blown away and who were preparing their weapons to be fired, then looked at each other, shrugged, grabbed the apparently unconscious Remmi and Rygel (Crais and the Kromagg officer were nowhere to be seen), and with Zhaan soon joining them ran like the wind, as lethal ping-pong sized balls of light came whizzing after them. D'Argo and Aeryn fired a few shots into the swarm, then joined the rest of their companions.

>

Nodding in a satisfactory way, Maldis turned on his heel, and while still walking disintegrated into crimson bits of light. His actions would later be discussed by the crew of Moya while in a heated debate of "Why Evil Villains Do Stuff Like This."

>

After a while of traveling deeper into Moya and discussion of plans, Pilot confirmed that the PK and Kromaggs seemed to have made communication and beginning to send scouts and soldiers after them. Pilot quickly directed the medley of beings into a vent-passageway for the time being. "But... what about you, Pilot?" asked Aeryn.

"I have had the DRDs build pseudo-walls around entrances to my

chamber. It seems to be working." Pilot quietly added, "Although for how long it will last... In the meanwhile, how are Rygel and Remmi doing?"
>

Remmi snored loudly, and Rygel burped and muttered something in his sleep.
>

"Pilot, is there a room that the Peacekeepers or whoever else is with them have already searched completely and probably won't return to? One nearby that is accessible by this vent?" asked Crichton.
"Firstly, I don't think the Peacekeepers are above searching the vents or using some sort of gas."
>

"If they use gas, we're all doomed, vent or not," pointed out Mallory, who happened to be in the very back.

"We'll be doomed a little less faster," explained Crichton.
>

"Secondly, I'm getting a bad cramp," offered D'Argo.

Maggie raised her hand "Thirdly, Rygel and Remmi are starting a snoring contest."

"All right, all right! First, everyone turn around and take the first left..."

Wack! "Ack! Sorry about that Remmi.....right on the head too... Ooh! The second time was a mistake too, I swear!..."
>

Time passes.

Shuffle. Shuffle. Crawl. "You do realize that's the 5th time-" "Look, the novelty of barging into your butt wore off a while ago, I warrant you."
>

>

More shuffling and crawling.

"I have a question," spoke Maggie out loud, to the crew of Moya. "Do you do this often?"

"Do we have to answer that?"
>

Finally Pilot called for a halt.

"Right, you in the front, ah... Enigma!" called out Aeryn. "Take the shield off the vent opening and scan the room."

"First of all, my name isn't Enigma-" started Mallory.

"It isn't?" said Aeryn, D'Argo, Zhaan, and Chiana, all looking genuinely surprised.

Apparently, it had something to do with the nature of translator microbes.

"....No!"

"I assure you, the room is safe," remarked Pilot.
>

After somehow getting inside the room, Remmi and Rygel, as well as Rygel's floating throne, were laid near each other on the floor, while the rest of the assembly quietly talked, not for the first time, on what to do. Soon Rygel and Remmi began to stir.

Rygel sat up, or did whatever the equivalent is to a Hynerian sitting up, looked at Remmi, and declared in an irked tone, "You! What are you doing in the Hollow Realm? Get out!"

Remmi blinked hazily and replied, "Yeah, well you don't look like my image of an angel either," before rolling over and going back to sleep.

"Oh look they're alive," observed Chiana in a mild tone.

"Yo Sparky, how'ya feelin?" greeted Crichton, as we went over to Rygel.

Rygel concluded, "That's it, if Crichton's here, then it can't be the Hollow Realm after all."

Crichton gave him a pat on the head. "There's the spirit!"
>

Finally Remmi sat up and looked around sleepily.

"Why do I have a headache?" He asked.

"Umm.... a side affect of the stun-gun of the Kromaggs?" offered Diana, who had carried Remmi through the vent passageway.

"I don't have a headache," commented Rygel smugly.

"Difference in psychology," explained Diana.

Remmi gingerly touched his head. "I think I have a bump on my head. Maybe two."

"Another side affect. Or difference in psychology. Are you sure it wasn't there before?"
>

D'Argo seemed doubtful about the whole situation. "Pilot, what guarantee do we have that the Peacekeepers won't come back here, at least for a while? Besides the fact they already searched the room?"

"Because," replied Pilot, with perhaps a hint of smugness in his tone, "the Peacekeepers are currently occupied trying to get into another room that has a dozen DRD's suspiciously guarding it."
>

As everyone was acknowledging Pilot's plan with impressed aahs and surprised looks, a women came walking in from the hallway.

Now, the fact is, if the scenario of a women walking in into a room from the blue occurred in, oh, Little Rock, Arkansas on a Tuesday afternoon in the middle of a game of Monopoly, it would startle everyone but probably not much more. However it must be taken into consideration, that this particular location where the scenario occurred was not in Little Rock, Arkansas on a Tuesday afternoon in the middle of a game of Monopoly.

So as it was, Zhaan looked alarmed, Aeryn and D'Argo assumed a fighting stance with their hands on their weapons, Chiana hastily retreated, and all four Sliders and Rygel gave a yelp of surprise.

Unfortunately, when Chiana retreated, she tripped over Crichton, who fell onto Aeryn, who grabbed D'Argo, who waved his arm out and hit Maggie, who reached for support via Mallory's arm, who made a valiant effort but started falling anyway and so grabbed Diana's shoulder, who grabbed Remmi's shirt, who flung his arms up and knocked Rygel out of his chair, who hit Zhaan, who lost her balance after all.

>

The women, who had apparently been about to say something, blinked.

>

"I'm beginning to sense a pattern," observed Crichton's voice from somewhere under the pile.

Getting up to smoothen her garbs, Zhaan casually asked, "Pilot? Why didn't you tell us someone was coming?" as if the scenario really was Little Rock, Arkansas on a Tuesday afternoon in the middle of a game of Monopoly.

>

As everybody struggled to get up, yet again, the women scratched her head slightly and looked confused. Then again, a look of confusion was the latest fad, so it didn't really matter.

"Wait a minute, you're.... um.... the evil dimensional twin of Quinn, aren't you?" noted Remmi.

The women looked nettled. "I DO have a name. Logan St. Clair-"

Logan was interrupted by everyone going, "Oooh, that's what it was!..." and Remmi's objection of, "I knew that! I mean, if you had just given me a few more seconds, I would have known-"

The women gave it an irritated wave. "Look, I'll get to the point. I did a U-turn slide, that is, entry-being-exit sort of slide, and somehow ended up somewhere in the middle of this... place. I've been trying to avoid a bunch of gibberish-speaking people, and I want to know What is going on and Where is Quinn and- OW!"

As she was saying this, a DRD had come quietly wrrring up to her foot.

>

"The DRD's don't have an unlimited supply of microbe translators, so these things really mustn't happen so often," muttered Pilot a moment later.

"Well, an answer to the latter of the questions can be supplied by Enigma over here," asserted Rygel with a gesture to Mallory.

"My name isn't Enigma!"

Rygel's ears, or whatever they were, went up. "It isn't?" he said, clearly startled. "When did this happen?"

"That's it, we have some messed-up Dejavu here!" declared Crichton.

"I wonder if it's just by coincidence..." murmured Pilot.

"I think I understood things better before I got a shot of the...microbe translators," muttered Logan. She seemed rather lost, apparently having given up on reality and decided that these people were some sort of allies after all.

Diana patted her on the shoulder sympathetically.
>

Maggie suddenly started striding towards Logan with a determined look on her face. "Right, seeing the rest of you aren't going to explain things to this poor woman, I will." She was soon joined by the rest of the Sliders. Taking Logan over a corner and facing their backs towards the rest of the crew, Maggie, occasionally helped by Diana, Mallory, and Remmi began quietly explaining what happened to Quinn, and for that matter, what happened to Wade and Professor Arturo. Actually, the last part she left up to Remmi.

While she listened, Logan's face shifted from one expression to another; disbelief, horror, astonishment, and sorrow.
>

When the Sliders were done talking, Logan gave a dry laugh, and murmured, "And all these years I've spent my time going from one world to another, sometimes finding clues about your whereabouts, sometimes losing the trail entirely, sometimes backtracking, never stopping to smell the scent of the flowers on the roadside nor enjoy the sight of trail side trees, only to find out that someone else already got to you people first. Figures."
>

Then Logan's eyes hesitantly flickered to the crew of Moya, who were across the room and discussing something with Pilot, mainly how it was that he hadn't informed them of Logan, to which Pilot was giving an answer about how Logan hadn't been tearing up Moya's hull or anything, and there were too many other Peacekeepers to worry about. "So what else is up?"

This time, Crichton came over to help explain things.

While she listened, Logan's face shifted, from astonishment, to disbelief, to an expression that can't be described but is funny to watch, to just staring, mainly at Crichton.
>

"As a hindsight, it may have been an unwise idea letting Crichton explain things," whispered Zhaan to D'Argo, who nodded in agreement. Meanwhile, the discussion of what to do went on.
>

"Ambush?"

"Maybe... but I don't think Crais or anyone of real importance would be vulnerable, especially after the capture in the docking bay..."

"Speaking of which. Chiana, Rygel, did you honestly believe that little bit was going to work?"

"No, but it was worth a try."

"About that ledge breaking off, Pilot-"

"It wasn't meant to support so many weights." Pilot added, "And you know it."

"You have to admit it's a first."

"The ledge breaking off or Pilot beginning to retort?"

It was realized that the conversation was getting very off topic.
>

>

Meanwhile, to the events after the peculiar explosion in the docking bay and the flight of the Sliders and the already-several-times-escaped prisoners. After a brief turmoil on both Kromagg and PK, including the issue of awaking Crais and the Kromagg officer as well as directing a Med team to see on any possible injuries, the Kromaggs managed to get a sufficient translating program fixed up, which they continued using even after the PK explained to them that the reason why they had attempted to stab the Kromaggs with a weird syringe was because it contained translator microbes.

Explanations of why each group was here didn't go too well, being that neither side trusted the other. Tensions begin to mount, mainly because of the translation program's necessity to the Kromaggs, which occasionally glitched.
>

"...Sir? WHAT did he say he wanted to do with you?"
>

Despite all this, the Peacekeepers and Kromaggs got it across that each was going after certain persons for certain unnamed reasons, and being that those certain persons were together inside Moya, they should join forces and root them out.
>

"...entrance to Pilot's chamber MUST be somewhere around here! Keep looking!"

Not without a few dark thoughts to their commander, the PK soldiers

began another round of searching. And then-

"With meticulous observation and probing with a segment of this wall, I have concluded with an equivocal speculation of spurious substance perchance enshrouding veracious entry at this orientation, sir!"

"....What the frell did you just say?"

"I think a false wall may be covering a door located here, sir!"

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2. Default Chapter Title

>

General Repeated Intro:

>

I originally had this under one story, but then I began to wonder wether a 120 KB story might be menacingly large afterall, and so figured that a shift to a two-part story couldn't do too much harm. (Watch my actions become the catalyst leading to the demise of humankind or something. Actually, that would be pretty funny.)

>
 As a note, the time frame is mid-season for both Season 5 of Sliders and Season 1 of Farscape. Also, I wasn't planning to, but since I made a motto to stick some sort of humor in as many places as I could, I guess this is a parody afterall, bluntly or subtly making fun of Farscape, Sliders, and anything else that came to mind while I was tapping along. (Naturally, some exceptions are included where felt needed.) So the story, as a fair warning, may be a bit, ah... different from the fanfic of norm. Take that as you will, I guess.

>

>

But anyway, without futher ado...

> <p>
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>

>

>

A Gathering of Travelers

-A FarSlide production-

>

>

>

"Attention, Sliders and . . . escaped convicts!" rang out a Kromagg voice on the comm. "We have taken your Pilot hostage, and to be blunt, he's completely helpless and at our mercy. Proceed without vehemence to the registered location of - " there was an audible pause. "Ah, just get you butts up to Tier 2, section 6, and don't do anything funny!"
>

Actually, the mentioned subjects already knew about this from the would-be hostage himself, and were in the middle of a hurried parley on the matter when they were interrupted.

"Apparently the DRD's aren't much of a help, after the PK and Maggs dragged out some laser-shielding materials and just started shooting the poor critters on sight."

"How did those two lots ever come to talk, much less work together, anyway?"

"I have a plan-" began Crichton.

The crew of Moya paused talking, then immediately resumed, louder then before.

"I have a plan-" began Crichton again.

"Wait wait! Don't say it aloud! Then it's sure to fail!" cried Diana.

"What was that supposed to mean?"

"Simple. Your own species has no faith in you, Crichton," remarked Aeryn rationally.

"No, I'm just saying, if you keep your plan secret, it's generally going to work, not to mention build suspense, but if you reveal your complete plan out loud, then it's a sure omen your plan's going to fail in some way or another," explained Diana logically.

"Then what am I supposed to do!?"
>

Although Mallory and Aeryn gave impressed nods at Diana's reasoning, D'Argo objected. "Let it be known I'm NOT going to put my life at stake without knowing why!"

"I second that motion," said Maggie, raising a hand, as Moya gave an unusually loud rumble.
>

>

Logan, however, stayed silent and apart from everyone. Remmi stole a glance at her, and slipped over to her side, running a few unsatisfactory opening lines in his head. Not for the first time, a slight shiver made its way up his spine as he realized how oddly echoing she was of Quinn.

>

"I'm still alive," quietly spoke Remmi. "What will you do with me?"

Logan looked at Remmi with those weary grey eyes of hers, eyes that were both familiar and alien at the same instance, eyes that held no answer.

>

>

Led by Crichton, Aeryn, and Remmi, the assembly marched as one to face Crais, the Kromagg commander, and their various guards.

Actually, to be truthful, Aeryn, Maggie, D'Argo, and Crichton were the only ones really marching; after a while, everyone else got off rhythm and just gave up, especially after Moya uneasily swayed a few times.

Anyway, they approached the first set of guards; the Peacekeepers stationed themselves on the left, the Kromaggs on the right. The Kromagg commander emerged from the mass of soldiers, bodyguards included. He gave the group a haughty glance.

>

"You have us, now what-" began Maggie.

The Kromagg narrowed his eyes. Cutting off any further remarks from the group, he noted in a casual manner, "The last time I counted there were 10 members of you little fiasco, not 9." The Kromagg's tone suddenly honed sharp. "Where's the absentee?"

>

Tension choked the air and stifled words.

"What . . . is this absentee you speak of?" began Rygel.

>

Irritation tickled the Kromagg's face.

"...What did that thing just say?" he muttered crossly to a nearby Peacekeeper.

Abruptly, the tension was broken.

>

"Ah, stop trying to distract me, we already have your companion anyway," drawled the Kromagg in an impatient tone, after a brief translation seminar. He made a flitting gesture with his right hand, and indeed, a moment later Mallory was dragged out. Hands bound behind back, a fiber-cable of some sort firmly bound around him, and generally looking the worst for escapement, he mouthed a silent, cringing, "Uhm....Sorry?" to everyone.

Crais looked at the Kromagg commander in disgust. "Must you be so blunt? Are you incapable of employing things more gracefully?"

The Kromagg made a face at Crais, which was a fairly effective comeback considering Kromagg features, and continued. "Right, you

lot, hand over your weapons, or your companion is . . . we're going to kill him, basically. Whatever his name is." The Kromagg looked at Mallory. "Speaking of which, who are you, anyway?"

"It's a universal question."
>

As D'Argo and the others, rather reluctantly, had their weapons taken by Peacekeeper soldiers, Moya suddenly jerked. Several sparks flew from the wall, and an acidic smell drifted in from somewhere.

Having gotten used to falling over, everyone recovered fairly quickly. "Now what?" snarled Crais. As if to respond, a stretch of lights dimmed, recovered briefly, then failed.

Crais punched a nearby door-switch, and the gate to Pilot's chamber swung open, revealing Pilot with several guards nearby. Pilot looked even more annoyed than usual, with good reason; every time he tried to say or do something, the nozzle of a gun was shoved into his face along with a rude order not to do so.

Crais marched up to Pilot, gestured for the guards to withdraw their weapons, slammed his hands on Pilot's desk thingy, and stated, "Unfunctional lights and abnormal swerving are not healthy signs. What is going on here?"

"Moya's systems are malfunctioning," explained Pilot. After a moment, he added, "What did you think it was?"

Crais irritably flicked his hand towards the ceiling, and went on. "Yes, yes, and why are they malfunctioning?"

"Although I can't be sure, being that I haven't had complete access to necessary data, I believe there's a link to and between the recent events, disturbing electromagnetic forces, and Moya being frightened," spoke Pilot. Then he looked up at Crais. "The latter is a consequence of not only by the two former causes, but also because we are heading towards a black hole."
>

Fear and alarm rippled through the Peacekeeper ranks, which was echoed in the Kromaggs, although it took a while because of the translation problem, in addition to the fact that the Kromaggs kept getting a message that "We are hitting a plaque ol'."

Although Crais and a few others had doubtful features, the tech soon confirmed this information was correct, although the black hole was a trifle far away. The crew of Moya, who along with the sliders had been lead into the room and were now standing near the gate-structure, looked alarmed. This hadn't particularly been calculated into plans.

The Kromaggs and Peacekeepers seem to think the same. "Why didn't you inform this sooner?" Pilot was asked, in addition to an order to change the course.

"What do you suppose I have been trying to do, sing a ballad to amuse the guards?" answered Pilot, working at his various controls and switches. "And even without my doing, Moya would have already changed her course, if she could have."

>

This report had barely been absorbed when Logan suddenly came crashing down on top of the PK with the confiscated weapons. D'Argo took advantage of the distraction to bat down the various guards surrounding him; Logan hauled the rifles and whatnot up from the unconscious guard, and heaved them with surprising force towards D'Argo and the rest.

D'Argo snatched his Qualta blade, did something to it while turning around towards the rest of the Peacekeepers and Kromaggs across the room, swiftly assumed a low position with his newly transformed Qualta rifle, and then fired a sapphire-hued bolt of energy into the leg of one of the PK that was holding Mallory hostage.

>

Mallory looked jolted for a moment, but quickly took the hint and managed to run out of there, not without glancing at his own leg a few times.

Logan grabbed Mallory to help him run faster. "This in't precisely the plan, but hold with me!"

"Why didn't you rescue me first?" shouted Mallory above the turmoil around him.

"I would have, but you weren't close enough."

They shoved through the door-gate and bolted out, soon joined, with Crichton and everyone else's complete surprise, by Diana, Remmi, and Maggie. "Fare thee well! Nice knowing you guys!"

Firing ceased, as the meddle of prisoners left and a number of Kromaggs rushed after them. The opening of a portal was faintly heard, and just as the scramble rounded a corner, someone threw herself into the portal. Moments later it closed, the Sliders nowhere to be seen.

>

>

"They ditched us! I cannot believe that!" cried Crichton.

"Ah, you and your species," declared Chiana.

Then Pilot's voice commed the crew. "Attention, I have additional reports-" There was a disturbance in the background, and some fighting was heard, bits and phrases leaking through. "I'm merely trying to-" "Shaddup and-" "...getting very tired-" There was a zapping sound; A cry was heard from the Peacekeepers, though more of surprise than pain, and Pilot resumed position as if nothing had happened. "I have additional reports on our current . . . situation."

>

Essentially, the report was the same as before, only that Moya was a little more closer to being disintegrate to tiny bits. However, the tone in which Pilot had a true fringe of fear woven into it, a quality absent in his initial report.

>

Meanwhile, the Kromaggs hadn't bothered capturing the crew of Moya (that had quietly snuck away). Instead, the commander had contacted the rest of his troops, and they had begun to withdraw from Pilot's chamber and march towards the docking bay. Their actions were immediately noticed and noted by Crais and the Peacekeepers in the form of, "What the frell are you doing!?"

"Well, the Sliders are gone, the ship is going to be sucked into a black hole, so to be frank, we really don't see a reason to stick around," answered the Kromagg commander in a mild tone, after the translation came through. Before anything else could be done, the Kromaggs had gotten aboard their ships and, with a final transdimensional wormhole fling, were quite abruptly gone from Moya.

>

Pilot had been frantically working at his controls, with no apparent result, both in Moya's trajectory and the doubt of the PK.

"Enough with the Dren-" began a soldier, striding up to Pilot and shifting a rifle threateningly.

With the hues of a panther, Aeryn silently appeared from a darkened corner of the room and, with an indifferent attitude, thrust the tip of her pulse rifle less than a palm's length from the sharply halted soldier's facial features.

Striding forth from a glare of light like a beast from the realms of nightmares, a deep rumble of a growl emitting from his throat, D'Argo hoisted his Qualta rifle up and lightly pushed the tip into the soldier's shoulders.

Tumbling like a piece of carrot fallen from a grocery store truck, Crichton fell from above with a sharp yell of surprise, and sprawled ungracefully on the floor.

>

As Crichton groaned slightly, D'Argo and Aeryn effectively persuaded the soldier to leave Pilot alone and go back with a few casual nudges of their weapons. Crichton manage to scramble up and hold his gun along side Aeryn and D'Argo, but somehow, it didn't quite have the same effect.

>

Meanwhile, Pilot had been trying a final set of commands, but he looked up and spoke in a somber tone. "Due to known and unknown causes, Moya will soon reach the point of no return in her present and intercepting course with the black hole."

As if mimicking a rehearsal, Crais replied, "How can we judge your honesty in this?"

"You can't. But either way, do you wish to stay?" Then Pilot quietly added to the crew, who had quietly appeared alongside Aeryn, D'Argo, and Crichton, "The rest of you have a better chance of survival, if you go with the Peacekeepers."

Although Pilot had voiced this in a low tone, it was not only the crew of Moya but Crais and the Peacekeepers who stiffened . . . as well as a few other unseen beings.

>

>

To cipher the origin of these beings, events must be traced back to when Logan dropped onto the PK, tossed the weapons the PK held back to their owners, and grabbed a newly liberated and still bounded Mallory.

Since everyone decided that the PK and Kromaggs were going to expect something like him, Mallory's main purpose was a diversion, Logan being the true core of the plans. However, as events turned for the unexpected, and possibly because she observed Mallory being caught and Maggie's response of anxiously whispering to Zhaan whether Mallory was supposed to be caught so quickly, Logan gave up on the plans and decided to go impromptu, so to speak.

After relaying her idea briefly, with instructions to share it with everyone else, to Diana, who was nearest to a vent in which Logan was hidden, Logan set off and managed to swiftly crawl along the supports of the ceiling. Logan quickly judged that Pilot didn't seem to need any particular help, and that positions to ambush Crais, the Kromagg commander, or anyone like that, as well as Mallory and the guards, were too awkward or would take too long to deploy.

Hence, knocking down the rather close Peacekeeper with the weapons.

>

Logan's plan had reached the ears of Remmi and barely those of Maggie, when Logan and Mallory had sped out the door, forcing Remmi, Maggie, and Diana to dash after them with a final parting to the rest of the crew of Moya. The element of surprise had been on their side, providing Maggie, Remmi, and Diana just enough time to round a corner and scramble into a nearby vent.

"What about me-" began Mallory, and was immediately and a trifle haphazardly shoved into the vent with the help of Diana and Remmi, as well as Logan.

"Logan..." called out Remmi.

Facing the other way, whipping out her timer, and punching a switch to initiate the vortex, Logan replied over the ensuing roar, "I'm not nobly self-sacrificing myself, since I don't care about you people to that point - But this much, I can do!"

Some moments later, the jumble of Kromaggs and whatnot came crashing around the corner, and as they did so, Logan flashed a rueful grin that silently spoke of irony at its best, then flung herself into the vortex.

And so did she depart, the character who was responsible for the few solemn and possibly touching moments that took place during the entire episode of lunacy.

>

It was after the vortex closed, that the realization of the true extent of Logan's action seeped into the four Sliders. It was also then, that they realized the crew of Moya hadn't been aware of Logan's intents, when Crichton's wounded tone reached their ears in

the form of, "They ditched us! I cannot believe that!" followed by Chiana's reply, neither of which helped heighten the Slider's unfavorable notions of how they were viewed in this particular universe.

Mallory spoke. "Um, could someone untie me?"
>

A miniature, tinny Pilot voice drifted through the hall to the vent, and although the Sliders really didn't have a clue to what he was saying, the voiced reactions of the Rygel, Aeryn, and company cued them in that Moya was still "heading for basic doom."
>

It was a more forceful intonation of the same message that the four heard, upon eavesdropping in a floor-level vent in Pilot's chamber. They had recently celebrated the Kromagg's departure, mainly by exchanging delighted looks and quietly going, "Yesssss!" but now, after briefly stiffening, they exchanged dismayed looks and quietly went, "Noooooo!"

Mallory added, "Speaking of which, could someone untie me?"
>

>

Tension, however, still clad the air in iron near the company of Pilot and his crew.

But Crichton, with his subtle skill at having the words of no one else, quietly cleaved the air. "If my survival is to be in the hands of a Peacekeeper, I would rather not chance it."

As they would sometimes allow on occasions, Aeryn and the rest of the crew of Moya gave Crichton swift glances, that, if maybe not an entirely awe-filled, were certainly not mocking either.

One by one, Rygel, Aeryn, Zhaan, D'Argo, and Chiana agreed to say, although Chiana muttered something or another about black holes and Leviathans before piping up with, "Oh... why not."
>

Crais looked... along the lines of infuriated. Then the Tech made an urgent sound, and said something in a low tone to Crais. Crais's features twisted in an unreadable expression, but after a final, sneering glance at crew of Moya, he ordered for the troops to withdraw and depart the Leviathan.
>

A curious thing happened when the last of the Peacekeeper vessels had flitted out and shot away from Moya; a snapping motion was faintly felt, a sudden swerve was definitely felt, and abruptly, Moya regained control of her maneuverability. After a slight wavering moment, she changed course and barely fired into Star Burst in time.

The crew of Moya had just finished watching the departure of the PK, when this occurred. Everyone exchanged surprised glances, then, excluding Rygel, burst into a sprint to Pilot's chamber.
>

Breathing hard, they nearly exploded into Pilot's chamber. Pilot looked up, a look of mild alarm etched into his features as an avalanche of words rained on him.

"The whole thing was a fake!?" cried D'Argo in astonishment, in between gasps of air.

"Pilot, I didn't know you possessed such marvelous theatrical talent," complemented Zhaan, sounding flushed.

"Yes, well, I wasn't feigning it, though."

"Didn't know you had it in you at all, to pull a hoax like that," commented Crichton, raising an eyebrow in surprised inquiry as he regained his breath.

"I suppose it was necessary to get those blasted Peacekeepers off Moya," began Rygel, dipping in from the door-gate with his hover-throne, "but still, I wished you could have achieved the objective through another path."

"....I wasn't faking it."

Abruptly, vocalization stopped.

>

"...What?" stated Chiana, cocking her head to the side slightly, and getting a dubious look on her face.

>

"Although all this chaos was making Moya nervous and causing minor irritations, my implications that Moya, due to system malfunctioning, was marked on an irreversible course for a black hole was, ah, impromptu," explained Pilot. "However, my words proved to be an presage, because it turned out Moya really was, due to system malfunctioning, marked on an irreversible course for a black hole. It was only that something about the Peacekeepers departing that triggered system availability in Moya."

>

There was a moment of silence. Then, at the same moment the covering to a vent located near the feet of the crew of Moya popped out and Mallory and Maggie stuck their heads out, all the members of the chamber, except Pilot, spoke, "What?" in a chorus of various tones ranging from dangerously low to panickingly high.

>

It took a moment for the crew of Moya to realize there had been a few too many voices present in the assembly of 'what's. Crichton and Aeryn gave each other puzzled glances, then looked down simultaneously.

>

Seeing both Aeryn and Crichton yell and jump back, Chiana, D'Argo, Zhaan, and Rygel hurriedly moved over to see what was the matter. Maggie crawled out unseen and managed to jump up into the middle of the swarm with a cheerful, "Hi!" creating another round of various shouts and yells of surprise. The rest of the Sliders came out on hands and knees, although Malloy, who was still bound in cable-rope, had to creep about much like an inch-worm in order to move.

>

Not knowing what to say, most everyone stared. Pilot looked amused. Finally Crichton, gesturing in a sweeping motion, declared, "What are YOU doing here?"

Remmi shrugged. "Whatever gave you the impression we'd ditched you?"

>

Mallory, now standing up, cleared his throat, thereby cutting off the mutterings of the crew of Moya in response of Remmi's statement, of which there were many. "Could someone untie me? Please?"

Diana stared at Mallory in astonishment. "How did you ever manage to move around and keep up with us, still tied up like that?"

>

Meanwhile, Remmi and Maggie began a quick explanation of what happened. They had gotten to about the point of D'Argo shooting the PK, when Mallory interjected with a complaint, "You could have hit me!" to D'Argo.

D'Argo shrugged. "You would have still been alive, probably. Stop freaking out."

>

>

Upon discovering that a hand-knife didn't even nick the cable-rope binding Mallory, Pilot called for some DRD's to try and melt the cable. Meanwhile, further explanations were given to the unseen account of the Sliders by, yet again, Remmi and Maggie.

"So Logan, despite her words and her initial intent, became your ally for the brief time she acquired?" asked Crichton. In the background, the DRDs set to work on lasering down Mallory's rope.

"That too, and also she mentioned her timer was nearing zero," explained Remmi, as Diana frowned again, Mallory groaned again, Pilot called off the DRD's, Zhaan offered to try a few solvents and acids on the rope, and D'Argo, his Qualta Blade.

As Remmi said that, both he and Maggie froze for a moment, then turned to each other and cried, "The Timer!"

By then, however, their audience had shrunk to being Crichton and Rygel; Zhaan had gone off to get this and that from her mysterious cache of substances, Pilot was attempting to raise the laser power on the DRD's, D'Argo was trying to figure out the best slicing angle on Mallory's ropes, Aeryn had decided to help Diana who was trying to talk Mallory into holding still, and Chiana wasn't really doing anything other than hang around and entertain herself by watching everyone.

Remmi dug the Timer out of his pocket and looked at it. His eyes widened.

"What? We didn't miss the Slide, did we?" asked Maggie, color beginning to drain from her cheeks.

Remmi blinked, turned the Timer upside down, and looked at it again. Maggie looked at Remmi. Remmi stuffed the Timer in his pocket, replied, "Never mind, we have loads of time," and went to join Diana and Aeryn, who were trying to get Mallory to not run away as D'Argo with his sword, Zhaan with her acids and solvents, and Pilot with his DRD's advanced on him. Maggie shrugged and followed him.

>

After several attempts with Qualta blades, DRDs, and various chemicals, as well as occasional combinations of the three, Mallory was told by Pilot, Zhaan, and D'Argo to give it up.

"What? Wait a minute! I'm not spending the rest of my life bound in ropes!" objected Mallory.

"Perhaps on your next slide, you will land on a world where there's a program to aid beings, like yourself, who are.... individual," offered Zhaan meditatively. As an afterthought, she added, "Although I myself have never actually harked of such programs, even from Crichton."

"There's always a first," thoughtfully mused Diana.

Mallory merely groaned.

>

With Mallory's insistent request to get the ropes off him, Zhaan and D'Argo stayed behind, while everyone else headed for the main chamber.

>

After some time, Zhaan and D'Argo came somberly trudging in.

"An... unanticipated....solution to Mallory's problems have been found," murmured Pilot dolefully from his holo.

Diana paled, and put a hand to her mouth. "You mean...."

Zhaan spoke in a morose tone. "Mallory has at last received eternal freedom from his troubles."

Remmi staggered a little, and whispered, "Oh, no, no.."

Maggie drew a sharp breath in horror. "He's... but how...."

"As mentioned, the unexpected caught us by suprise," muttered D'Argo darkly.

>

A while ago, the object of their conversation, trailing behind Zhaan and D'Argo and muttering something about knots in Kromagg ropes and obvious solutions, had reached the main chamber and was about to go in. But, upon catching a few words from the members inside, he hesitated and decided agianst doing so.

>

Maggie tried to mask her grief, but her voice nearly cracked with emotion. "I can't... believe it. That he's not with us any more."

>

D'Argo blinked.

>

"Oh, Remmi, what are we going to do?" wailed Diana, and Remmi comforted her, although it was obvious he was just as distressed.

>

"Er-" began Pilot.

>

Maggie went over to join them. "I just can't accept it, that Mallory's gone. I mean, sure, he was kind of irritating now and then, but-

>

Remmi thought for a moment. "Actually, he really was exasperating sometimes."

>

"He was capable of being perpetually annoying, but that didn't mean he deserved such a fate. He was still a nice guy!" Diana paused, thought for a moment, and added, "Not that I can recall the last time he did a deed worthy of praise."

>

For a few moments, Remmi, Diana, and Maggie pondered on this.

>

"...But anyway let's give a prayer for Mallory's soul," murmured Remmi. All three of them bowed their heads, put their hands together, and started muttering. D'Argo and Zhaan looked at each other hesitantly, not sure what to do.

>

Meanwhile, Mallory, remaining unseen right outside a gateway, had at first looked confused, then amused, then downright pleased. However, as Maggie, Remmi, and Diana's talk wore on, he began to acquire, more and more, a look of annoyance. But now, he looked almost touched.

>

Then Remmi paused and declared in a loud whisper, "Dibs on his nifty keychain."

"Hey, I wanted that-" began Diana.

>

Having enough, Mallory furiously burst in, his former expression wiped away and strided towards Diana, Maggie, and Remmi. "Look, being dead and all, I don't appreciate-

>

The three Sliders jolted in surprise. Fear, disbelief, then joy flashed across their faces, and, thundering towards Mallory, proceeded to squeeze him in a huge group hug, thus nearly killing him afterall.

>

Rygel, who with Aeryn, Crichton, and Chiana had been quietly standing in the back of the room had been watching a good bit of the whole thing, yet again effectively summed things up by muttering in a low

voice, "You and your species, Crichton."

>

>

Meanwhile, realizing Mallory needed air, Diana, Maggie, and Remmi finally let go of him.

"Mallory? Don't you ever die on us again."

"Uh...Ok."

"Well, I for one, am just glad you're alive afterall!"

"What, even though you want my keychain so badly?"

"...You heard that part?"

"Yes I did."

"Ah, exactly how much you hear?"

"About when Pilot finished speaking onward."

"...Oh..."

"Speaking of which. D'Argo, Zhaan, Pilot, about what you told us-"

"We, er, never said Mallory had died."

"....."

"They weren't somber for that. Didn't D'Argo mention how an unexpectedly simple solution had been found? See, I finally figured out that the Kromaggs, in order to wrap me in rope, might have just tied-"

"Young Mallory, it would be adviseable not to bring up the subject."

>

As the crowd of beings settled down, Remmi suddenly exclaimed, "Geiger!"

"Where?" cried everyone, jumping up and either shifting to defensive positions or frantically scanning their quarters.

"No, I mean, whatever happened to Geiger?"

"Oh." Maggie and Crichton shrugged, and everyone sat down again.

Chiana still looked suspicious. "Pilot, is there anything you'd like to say to us?" she asked.

"Oh, for!... Yes, Chiana, Geiger, the Kromaggs, the Peacekeepers, and whatever other enemies we've managed to pick up," began ranting Pilot, referring to enemies like one would refer to burrs and hitchhiker seeds, "are all hiding under your sleeping bunk, just waiting for you to shut down luminescence in your quarters when you

enter your sleep cycle!"

"Speaking of which, Durka never did show up," noted Rygel.

"His loss," shrugged Remmi.

"Next time, let's send out invitations earlier," suggested Crichton mildly.

>

>

"Whoa!" said Mallory, jumping up and startling those around him. "I just realized something! We can instantly understand Spanish now! This rocks!" He added, "In fact, we can comprehend virtually any other language that we hear! Even though chances are we won't be able to speak a word of that language ourselves! But this still rocks!"

>

>

"In addition to what Pilot said, certain distortions or alterations of physical and metaphysical forces in or around Moya could account for part of it," offered Zhaan as part of a conversation involving the events aboard Moya.

"Even the messed up DejaVu?" asked Crichton, intrigued.

"No, blame that on the luck you carry," said someone else.

>

>

But in due time, Remmi eyed the Timer and announced that departure was imminent.

>

"Want to come with us?" asked Remmi quietly to Crichton, as the Sliders prepared to depart.

Crichton briefly hesitated, then barely shook his head. Smiling softly with perhaps a faint hue of bitterness, he replied. "No. I . . . have friends here. A family. A life. And also, calculating the disturbances in the electromagnetic field, Moya's starburst, and that Logan's U-turn slide doesn't prove anything, the chances of me ending up somewhere safe, much less my own earth, is, as once phrased, panikingly slim."

"Oh... right Eeeeww..." By now, the rest of the Sliders had been listening, and all four of them looked very, very troubled.

>

Crichton suggested, "You could just stay with us."

>

The Sliders briefly thought about this, reflecting on their time aboard Moya and glancing around the room, then politely but hurriedly declined.

>

As final farewells were exchanged, Crichton gestured for the attention of the Sliders.

"Before you go," he spoke, "Answer one question."

"What?" The sliders exchanged slightly nervous looks.

"Who won the superbowl?"

The Sliders exchanged slightly . . . different looks.

Nonetheless, they offered their answers as helpfully as possible.

"Do you...?"

"I'd completely forgotten about it -

"

"Um..."

"Sorry..."

Crichton's face dropped.

>

And then, all too soon, the timer hit Zero, the vortex was activated, and with a final parting cry, the Sliders dramatically leaped and vanished into the crackling blue vortex.

>

The vortex closed with a final roar. In the hushed silence that was left, Aeryn was heard to mutter, "Frell, I'd like to make an exit like that."

>

>

It would have been nice to say, and so came to a close a Gathering of Travelers, a assemblage where those who attend are destined never to meet again.

>

However, the fact is, it isn't true.

>

>

>

>

Epilogue

>

It was perhaps a week that had passed since the departure of the Sliders. Aeryn and Crichton were walking down the corridors of Moya on their way to the food-chamber, lightly arguing, which should have been their second if not first clue, both having completely forgotten some announcement or another by Pilot, which should have been their major clue.

>

But as it was, when Aeryn and Crichton turned to enter the food-chamber, they collided straight on with Mallory, who was munching on a food cube. Mallory blinked, looked briefly startled,

and took another bite out of his food cube. Aeryn and Crichton, meanwhile, yelled in utter surprise and backed up against Moya's wall.

>

"Mallory, are you terrorizing people again?" began Maggie, appearing from inside the room and strolling for the entranceway, popping a food cube into her mouth as she did. In a slightly muffled voice, she continued. "I thought we told you not to do that, after the last dimension's ordeal-"

>

She was interrupted by Rygel. "What's all this commotion about-" began Rygel, flitting into view from a side corridor. Then he noticed Mallory. "Oh dear gods, not YOU people again!"

"What's going on?" demanded D'Argo in a roar, while charging towards them, Qualta Blade fully unsheathed, head-tentacles flying, and generally looking alarming enough to make Mallory yelp in terror, accidentally pitch the last of the food cube at D'Argo in a reflexive action, and retreat back inside the chamber as the food cube hit D'Argo on the forehead and caused him to blink.

>

"Oh, it's Crichton and his species," replied Rygel dully, as if this sort of scenario, where transdimensional travelers popping onboard biomechanoid ships in the middle of nowhere, were an everyday thing.

>

"....I noticed," D'Argo replied, brushing away bits of food cube as he sheathed his sword.

>

A nearby vent swung open and Chiana stuck her head out. "They're back? Does that mean we can send out invitations?" she asked in a hopeful tone.

>

Aeryn and Crichton briefed the situation, then in one voice roared, "Pilot!" causing Rygel, who was hovering nearby, to cringe and put his hands up to his ears. Or whatever they were.

>

"Well, I did warn you," said Pilot over the comm with a tint of smugness. He recited, " 'Possible abnormalities have arisen in nearby nourishment sustenance quarters, may concern all members of crew.' "

"So that was referring to us?" asked Maggie's dubious voice from inside the chamber.

>

>

When D'Argo, Crichton, Aeryn, Rygel, and Chiana finally entered the chamber, the sight of Remmi, Diana, Maggie, and Mallory, most of them sitting on chairs or stools eating food cubes and looking vaguely startled, greeted them. A pile of food cubes was heaped on a center-table, and a good number of the things were scattered on the floor. In addition, Zhaan was already in the chamber and seemly well

acquainted with the Slider's presence.

>

"You know, I spent some time wondering how you people could be so fit and trim- broadly speaking, of course -despite being cooped up in a spaceship," noted Diana, picking up a food cube. "But the taste of these cubey food things seem to hint at an answer." She didn't seem to notice her creative interpretation on the name of the food cubes, nor the curious looks she recieved.

>

In the end, everyone ended up settling down and eating food cubes, since they were all pretty hungry anyway, and listened to the brief account told by the Sliders.

Apparently, the Sliders had debarked on Moya and, after momentary astonishment, opted to stay put in the room, having no means of communication to anyone aboard the ship and no particular confident that roaming the halls would result in anything other then getting lost. They quickly found some seats to sit in while munching on food cubes, which is how Zhaan chanced upon them.

>

>

Crichton folded his arms and raised an eyebrow. "That's all cool, but you know you're forgetting something."

"Crichton's correct," stepped in Aeryn. "Zhaan, did you come in here, start chatting with the Sliders, and deliberately ignore notifying the rest of us or what?"

Crichton's haughty expression stumbled. "No! Well, that too, actually. But the issue is, HOW did you people ever land here?"

>

"Technically, we didn't land. We shot out, tripped over each other, and hit a container of food cubes, which is how we discovered them anyway," explained Diana, waving around a food cube in emphasis as she spoke.

Then she threw the food cube behind her shoulder, and didn't seem to be aware of the fact she had managed to hit D'Argo on the forehead and showered him with fragments of food cube. Diana then renewed her explanation, either taking no notice of D'Argo's low rumble of irritation, or actually not noticing, either of which would be probable.

>

"But anyway, returning to a previous dimention is possible, although rare, and considering how we slid in this particular universe, in this particular location, the situation is near improbable.

So explaining the actual reasons behind our return is a different matter."

>

Diana paused, reached for a food cube, and delicately nibbled it.

Everyone waited expectantly.

Diana finished consuming the bit of food cube, then seem to notice everyone's impatient stares. "What?"

"Um... Go on."

"Oh." Shrugging, Diana said, "How should I know?"

The crew of Moya appeared suprised, though fleetingly.

Remmi, Maggie, and Mallory looked stunned.

>

Remmi threw his hands up in a defeated gesture. "Man, how come our lives are so wierd?"

>

"As mentioned earlier, everything is connected in a delicate web of physical and metaphysical forces, and it is a combinations of stark and subtle variations that present themselves in the known reality. But either way, all things of oddity are merely in the eye of the beholder," shrugged Zhaan, as if she'd just given an explanation of how a folding-table works.

>

"Let's just blame everything on electromagnetic fields," suggested Mallory, after a moment of bewildered silence on behalf of everyone else.

Everyone had to agree on his logic.

>

Remmi rasied his hand. "Um-"

>

"Blame everything on Peacekeepers," suggested D'Argo.

Everyone had to agree on his logic too.

>

"Just blame everything on Crichton," suggested Rygel.

Everyone, except Crichton, had to agree on his logic.

>

"...It was a rhetorical question," gingerly muttered Remmi.

"Geeze, Remmi, haven't you learned yet? With the likes of us, not only are half the laws of physics destined to be broken or bent, but you never, ever state a rhetorical question outloud." With this cheerful statement, Maggie tossed a food cube into the air to catch in her mouth. Chiana caught it midway and grinned, only to have both foodcube and smile stolen by Rygel.

>

"Hey!" she protested as Rygel crowed triumphantly, until Mallory sprang up from behind him and snatched the food cube from his clutch.

However, as Chiana had also lunged forward to grab the thing from

Rygel's hand, Mallory and Chiana collided with a loud whack and a duel "Oompf!"

>

The food cube flew from Mallory's hands into the air. Crichton instinctively caught it, although he wasn't really sure what to do with it. Aeryn came sauntering up behind him, a look of curiosity on her features. Then suddenly Crichton realized that Rygel, intending to reclaim the food cube, was zooming towards him full speed. With a yell, Crichton ducked, throwing the food cube up into the air as he did so, which Aeryn caught, not realizing Rygel was heading towards her.

>

Rygel hadn't expected this, and although he tried to cut his speed, the momentum and velocity of his flight were too much to stop all together. He hit Aeryn face first, and both of them went tumbling down, the food cube sailing up from Aeryn's hand.

>

It was not a hard fall, so Aeryn scrambled onto her feet, spitting and wiping her mouth, her face distorted in an expression of absolute disgust. She spun around at Rygel who had gotten on his throne and was starting to rise into the air. "You did NOT just kiss me!"

Rygel looked equally revolted, as he dusted himself off then looked up. "Believe me, I had no desire to make oral contact with a Sebacean either-"

He was interrupted by Aeryn hoisting her pulse rifle up and calmly loading it. "Rygel? Die."

>

Meanwhile, Crichton had caught the food cube in mid-air, as Chiana clambered up from the other side of the room. Then he realized that was an unwise decision, and so strolled over to the nearest being, which happened to be Diana, and placed the food cube in her hand. "Here. I entrust the food cube to you. Guard it with your life."

>

As he said this, Chiana, fixed on obtaining the food cube, came dashing across the room towards Diana. So did Rygel, although his objective was to flee from Aeryn, who, chasing Rygel, also came rushing, however inadvertently, towards Diana.

>

Seeing all three being charging towards her and Crichton leaving her with the food cube, Diana protested, "But I'm just a weak, defenseless, female scientist!"

As she said this, she leaped up, grabbed a low-hanging rafter, and swung herself up with considerable strength as Chiana, Rygel, and Aeryn came and went harmlessly charging under her.

As she swung down, she managed to accidentally bump into Crichton, although how exactly she accomplished this, without meaning to, was a mystery.

>

In the meantime, Chiana, after nearly hitting a wall, realized that

she couldn't stop running because of both Rygel and Aeryn coming behind her. She tried changing course, accidentally deflected off an already unbalanced Crichton, who somehow missed Rygel but stumbled into an oncoming Aeryn, meaning that both of them ended up sprawled on the floor ontop of each other. Happily, this gave Chiana and Rygel a chance to slow down.

>

As Diana regained her footing, she held the miraculously unharmed food cube, and declared in a mature, superior tone, "And for crying outloud, why are we all fighting over a cubey food, or whatever it was called?"

Mallory took the moment to swiftly procure the food cube from her ungarded grasp.

"Hey! Give that back!" yelled Diana furiously and went after him.

>

Mallory let his guard down and glanced behind him; it was then that Zhaan angrily snatched the food cube from his hands, ignoring his objections, and held it up. "Enough! The way the lot of you scrabble over a mere food cube bears significant resemblance to-"

No one ever did know what they significantly resembled, because Zhaan, in the heat of the moment, had proceeded to swing her arm in emphasis and strike D'Argo, who had come walking up unnoticed beside her, full in the face with her hand which was still holding the poor foodcube.

>

As Zhaan whirled around in horrified surprise, D'Argo, with an indecipherable expression, slowly, deliberately, brushed from his face pieces of food cube, of which there were quite a number, since the food cube had rather spectacularly shattered.

>

Maggie gave Remmi a look, in addition to a light shove.

"What?" protested Remmi.

>

Pilot, who had quietly been watching the entire time, looked amused.

>

>

A gathering of travelers can be quite solemn, dramatic, even touching. But in the same token, they may not always be termed sober.

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The End

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AkaiHato

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